



August 2005

Greetings,

I'm pleased to report that it's been a busy and productive month for "Operation: Allied Against Meth."

Most significantly, the Meth Task Force met for the first time. Plus, we're wrapping up our visits to county Meth Action Teams, laying the groundwork for continued education efforts over the coming year, and the AGO's two new meth prosecutors have hit the ground running.

METH TASK FORCE

On August 10, we held the first "Operation: Allied Against Meth" Task Force meeting to discuss the meth epidemic. The task force is made up of state and local law enforcement officials, prosecutors, business and community representatives, treatment providers and elected officials.

Over the next two months, the task force will evaluate potential policy tools designed to assist in the battle against Washington's meth crisis. The task force will then make specific recommendations to be considered by the state Legislature during the 2005 Legislative Session.

With a wealth of expertise on our side, the task force is addressing a wide array of issues, including:

- Clandestine labs;
- criminal penalties and sentencing;
- property seizures and clean-up;
- cross-border trafficking;
- drug court, treatment and drug endangered children;
- reduction, education and prevention; and
- a future governance strategy.

Each member of the task force has been assigned to one of three sub-committees:

1. *Criminal Sanctions*, chaired by Whatcom County Sheriff Bill Elfo
2. *Demand Reduction*, chaired by Sen. Jim Hargrove
3. *Cleanup & Governance*, chaired by Snohomish County Prosecutor Janice Ellis.

Each committee will meet twice over the next month, and recommend action items at

the next Meth Task Force meeting in on September 29.

METH ACTION TEAMS

When “Operation: Allied Against Meth” was launched earlier this year, the Attorney General’s Office set a goal to visit every Meth Action Team in Washington state by the end of the year – and we are well on our way to achieving this objective!

Stops in Chelan, Douglas and hopefully Okanogan and Kittitas Counties will complete our visits.

Each of these meetings has provided valuable information and insight into what is happening – both what is working and where assistance is needed – on the front lines in this critical battle. We are looking forward to building upon these new partnerships in the coming months.

NEW PROSECUTORS

Our two new meth prosecutors, Scott Marlow and Rosalyn Diorio, have hit the ground running. On the job for only a few weeks, they have already received requests for assistance from six counties and have opened eight meth-related criminal cases. More cases are expected to arrive from Adams County this week.

Many counties are struggling with the increasing number of meth-related cases on their plates, and I’m pleased that the Attorney General’s Office is able to provide this support and assistance at the request of local prosecutors.

EDUCATION

This week, we also met with Susan York and Travis Talbott of Lead on America, a Snohomish County community-based anti-drug organization that the AGO partnered with last spring to make anti-meth presentations in high schools around the state.

The presentation developed by Lead on America was extremely powerful and well received by the roughly 7500 students in the four schools we visited. The red “Don’t Meth Around” wrist bands that were distributed at the end of each presentation were particularly popular.

We are now gearing up to do more presentations with Lead On America during the coming 2005-06 school year. In fact, we hope to bring our anti-meth message to at least one dozen more high schools around Washington by next June.

We are also considering adding to each visit an educational presentation to parents during the corresponding evenings, in partnership with the local Meth Action Team, to further increase awareness in local communities.

If a high school in your area might be interested in one of these presentations, please contact AGO Public Information Officer Sarah Frost at sarahf1@atg.wa.gov.

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 8 I’ll be addressing the Washington Summit on Alcohol and Other Drug Issues in Tacoma.

September 15 I’ll be attending the Drug Endangered Children Training in

Kennewick and Longview.

September 29 The Meth Task Force will hold its second meeting from 9:00 a.m. to noon in the Senate Rules Committee Meeting Room in the State Capitol Building in Olympia.

Thanks, as always, to everyone involved in the fight against meth. Please don't hesitate to contact us if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Rob McKenna

Attorney General